

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES November 28, 2000

PRESENT:

Mayor Peter J. Kelly
Deputy Mayor Jerry Blumenthal
Councillors: Stephen Streach
Gary Hines
Keith Colwell
Ron Cooper
Harry McInroy
Brian Warshick
Condo Sarto
Bruce Hetherington
Jim Smith
John Cunningham
Dawn Sloane
Sue Uteck
Russell Walker
Diana Whalen
Linda Mosher
Stephen D. Adams
Brad Johns
Bob Harvey
Len Goucher
Reg Rankin
Gary Meade

REGRETS:

Councillor Sheila Fougere

STAFF MEMBERS:

Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Vi Carmichael, Municipal Clerk
Ms. Patti Halliday, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

1. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - NONE**
2. **APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Blumenthal, seconded by Councillor Warshick, that the Order of Business be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - SECOND QUARTER**

- A staff report prepared for Dale MacLennan, Director, Financial Services, regarding the above, was before the Committee for its consideration. A revised Attachment #1 of the staff report was circulated to the Committee.

Ms. Dale MacLennan, Director, Financial Services, introduced the following Financial Services staff members: Gerrard Cotreau, Team Leader, General Funds; Pamela Caswill, Acting Manager of Accounting; Nancy Elwood, Team Leader, Capital Funds; Bruce Fisher, Budget Coordinator; and, Betty MacDonald, General Manager, Financial Planning Services.

(Councillor Mosher took her place at the meeting at 1:20 p.m.)

With the use of overheads, Ms. MacLennan presented the Second Quarter Financial Statements to the Committee. Copies of her presentation were circulated.

Ms. MacLennan stated staff is projecting a \$20,000 surplus at the end of the year, which is basically a breakeven point.

Responding to a question of Councillor Uteck regarding Project Genesis, Ms. MacLennan stated the purpose of this project was to install SAP software. Now that the installation is complete, at the end of the year there will not be a general pot of Project Genesis savings built into the budget.

(Councillor Goucher took his place at the meeting at 1:35 p.m.)

In response to a question of Councillor Uteck regarding Solid Waste, Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer, stated the total tonnage of the residential waste stream is increasing at a faster rate than predicted. Mr. Meech noted increased revenues will offset the increase this year, but it becomes problematic the next fiscal year and an increase is still being projected. Therefore, staff is trying to focus on this now to achieve some

stability to the overall cost of the program. If not, Mr. Meech stated people will start to question the whole diversion program and whether or not the Municipality can afford it.

In response to a question of Councillor Uteck regarding the reason for police overtime, Ms. MacLennan stated police overtime was reflected in the First Quarter report, and agreed to obtain further information regarding this and circulate it to Council.

(Councillors Colwell and McInroy took their places at the meeting 1:40 p.m.)

With regards to the Solid Waste deficit, Councillor Walker stated he believes there are more contributing factors to this than just increased residential waste, such as increasing leachate and fuel costs. In response, Mr. Meech stated residential waste is the largest single expenditure contributing to the over expenditure.

Responding to a question of Councillor Walker regarding pollution control, Ms. MacLennan stated the \$1.8 million relates primarily to waste water treatment plant infrastructure reserve. Ms. MacLennan agreed to provide Council with a copy of this reserve's business case.

In response to a question of Deputy Mayor Blumenthal regarding UN duty and police overtime, Ms. MacLennan stated it is her understanding that UN duty and overtime are not related, but she agreed to confirm this for Council.

Responding to a question of Mayor Kelly, Mr. George McLellan, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, stated Project Genesis/SAP is a management information system which has the ability to generate information that the old system was unable to do. Mr. McLellan stated a lot of the information will now be in the hands of the departments.

In response to a question of Councillor Sarto, Mr. Jim Bauld, Diversion Planning Coordinator, Waste Resources, stated that, in spite of significant achievements, the residential rate of refuse is still increasing. However, Mr. Bauld noted there has been a decrease in this quarter compared to the first quarter.

Mayor Kelly thanked Ms. MacLennan and her staff for their presentation.

4. OVERVIEW OF 2001/2002 CAPITAL AND OPERATING BUDGET PROCESS (ORAL)

Mr. George McLellan, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, and Ms. Dale MacLennan, Director, Financial Services, presented the overview of the draft 2001-2002 Budget. Copies of their presentation were circulated to the Committee.

(Councillors Adams, Sloane, Smith and Streach took their places at the meeting at 1:55 p.m.)

Responding to a question of Mayor Kelly, Ms. Betty MacDonald, General Manager, Financial Planning Services, stated there are two steps for Council input in the capital allocation process, a questionnaire to be completed by members of Council, and through the Program and Service Review Committee. Also, for the benefit of the new Councillors, Ms. MacDonald noted a presentation of the process to date was provided, and there will be additional information provided during the upcoming Councillor orientation session.

In response to a suggestion of the Mayor regarding having the process come to a Committee of the Whole meeting rather than going to Program and Service Review, Mr. McLellan stated that would be possible, but noted that Program and Service Review Committee meetings are open to all members of Council.

Responding to a question of Councillor Cunningham regarding Social Assistance grants, Mr. McLellan noted that next year will be the last year. In response to a further question of the Councillor, Mr. McLellan stated the total amount of requests for capital projects next year is \$128 million.

Deputy Mayor Blumenthal expressed concern with the downloading to the Municipality by the Provincial Government of which the residents are unaware, such as assessment services. The Deputy Mayor stated there is approximately \$8-\$10 million of downloading taking place by the Province, and it is time UNSM sends a message to the Province that the municipalities are strongly opposed to this. Mayor Kelly noted that both he and Mr. McLellan have met with the Province on these issues. Councillor Hetherington suggested when such meetings take place in the future, an email should be sent to all of Council keeping them apprised of what is taking place.

Councillor Hetherington raised the issue of the letter from the School Board, dated November 27, 2000 which was previously circulated to Council, and stated that he hopes a response will be forwarded to the School Board rejecting their request. The letter requested that Council consider placing a waiver on the properties currently occupied by Queen Elizabeth, St. Patrick's and Halifax West High Schools, to allow the Board to sell these properties and allocate the proceeds of the sale towards new schools. Mayor Kelly stated he has made some inquiries and has brought the issue to the attention of the Province and is awaiting clarification. The Mayor agreed to keep Council updated once a formal response is received from the Province. Councillor Hetherington stated if there are discussions taking place regarding these properties Council should be made aware of them. Mayor Kelly stated he would respond to the School Board indicating that Council is not interested in going with their approach.

With respect to assessment services, Councillor Goucher suggested if the Municipality is going to be paying for this service, it should be performing the service itself. The Councillor inquired if this has been examined. In response, Mr. McLellan suggested the Municipality may want to look at an alternative service delivery if it is going to pay for this service.

Councillor Rankin stated the demands associated with new growth, such as increased transportation services and playgrounds, need to be examined, and questioned how the new growth in taxes can be reserved. With respect to education, Councillor Rankin asked if staff could come forward, at some date, and state, based on their evaluation, if the Municipality's contribution to the total education bill will be higher. Councillor Rankin suggested the Municipality should at least state to the Province what it believes would be a fair percentage.

Responding to a question of the Councillor regarding the Burke Oliver report projects, Mr. Peter Bigelow, General Manager, Parks and Recreation Services, stated these items are being considered by staff for inclusion in the current Capital Budget. Councillor Rankin stated this a report commissioned by Council and full discussion of this report should take place in the context of the Capital Budget. Mr. McLellan noted not all aspects of the report will be included in the Capital Budget put forth by staff, but he suggested an Information Report could be brought back to Council regarding the status of the various elements within the Burke Oliver report. Councillor Rankin suggested a copy of the Burke Oliver report should be provided to the new members of Council. In closing, Councillor Rankin stated he would like staff to come forward in this budget year to explain what the strategy is for executing the projects in the report. Mr. Meech stated these projects have been identified and will have to be prioritized by staff and a recommendation brought back to Council.

Councillor Cooper stated he would like to have discussion regarding the utilization of assessment increases and the municipal mandate focus. The Councillor inquired if it was the intention to expand the mandate focus. Mr. McLellan responded that staff is not suggesting this is something they want to change. However, he noted the focus is often blurred by the inaction of others, and the Municipality needs to initiate equity. Councillor Cooper stated that, due to the current staff level and resources, the Municipality is falling behind in the service it provides. The Councillor suggested staff could look at using some the increased assessments to keep up with what it should be providing, but is not, rather than trying to expand the services. Mr. McLellan stated examination could be given to see what modifications can be made to allow the levels of service to be raised.

Mayor Kelly thanked staff for their presentation.

5. MAINLAND NORTH COMMON - PROPOSED HIGH SCHOOL SITE

- A staff report prepared for Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, regarding the above, was before the Committee for its consideration.

Mr. Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, and Mr. Peter Bigelow, General Manager, Parks and Recreation Services, presented the staff report.

Councillor Walker spoke in support of the proposal, stating he would hope that the present Halifax West lands would come back to HRM and the sale of the property be spent on infrastructure for the Halifax Mainland Common. The Councillor also spoke in support of the campus approach, and suggested that the school become a regional high school to break down some of the barriers in HRM. If the proposed school should close, Councillor Walker stated the land should revert back to HRM. Responding to a question of the Councillor regarding the time frame for negotiations between Clayton Developments and the Province, Mr. Bigelow stated this will depend on the level of interest from the Province. Mr. Bigelow noted discussions also need to continue with Clayton Developments regarding their interests.

Councillor Whalen thanked staff for the report, noting the school would be a benefit to both the students and residents of HRM and could serve more than just the Halifax West students. The Councillor noted recreational benefits for the area could be a catalyst to get things started in this area again.

MOVED by Councillor Whalen, seconded by Councillor Walker, that the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council that Council:

- 1) Approve in principle the provision of five acres in the area identified on Attachment "A" to the Province of Nova Scotia for purposes of building a new high school facility to replace the current facility at Halifax West on Dutch Village Road.**
- 2) Authorize staff to continue negotiations with the Province and adjacent property owners to advance the provision of a serviced site on the Common.**

Responding to a question of Councillor Cooper, Mr. Bigelow stated an appraisal of the five acres of land will be conducted. Councillor Cooper agreed that the land should only be leased to the School Board. The Councillor questioned why a sports field would not be included with the school, as is the standard practice. Mr. Bigelow stated it is anticipated that one would not be required as these amenities would be built into the park, but suggested this could be used as a point during negotiations. Councillor Cooper suggested night and weekend access, for community use, should also be negotiated.

Speaking in support of the motion, Councillor Rankin stated this would be an excellent investment and a catalyst for other projects.

Councillor Warshick expressed concern with giving up designated parkland. Mr. Bigelow stated it was the committee's intention that any revenue generated from the sale of the Halifax West School site be turned back into development of recreational facilities. Responding to a question of Councillor Warshick, Mr. Bigelow stated there is an item in the 2001 budget to develop one of the ball fields in the Mainland Common. With respect to the proposed road, Councillor Warshick inquired if it would sufficient to handle any additional traffic flow from a possible stadium. Mr. Bigelow responded if a stadium was to be built, an upgraded road would be required.

Councillor Harvey stated consideration should never be given to selling the Queen Elizabeth High School land for commercial or residential development.

Councillor Uteck noted Saint Mary's University's stadium is in need of repair and cost sharing from the three levels of government will be sought. The Councillor stated she hopes Council will look at this in two years time to see what assistance can be provided for that stadium.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councillor Hetherington, seconded by Deputy Mayor Blumenthal, that the meeting adjourn at 3:40 p.m. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Vi Carmichael
Municipal Clerk